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The service began with the call to prayer, sung by a solo cantor. The first words, “God is most great, God is most great,” set the tone for a service focused on worshiping the one, true God. Following this, the imam began a prayer, first in Arabic and then in the vernacular. In this prayer, the imam set forth major elements of the religion, including *Tawhid*, avoiding *Shirk*, glorifying Allah, confirming the prophets, and more. This portion of the service, while initially seeming like a single prayer, similar to that of the Nicene Creed, turned into more of a sermon. This sermon focused on knowledge and its role in Islam; the imam said that being knowledgeable about the religion is essential to being a witness and believer of Allah. He also focuses on the importance of being present in the face of the Judge, not just present in body, but in mind and belief. One interesting aspect I picked up on was the emphasis on sacrifice present in his sermon; this is something present in all major Abrahamic monotheisms. In Judaism, sacrifice is present in the *Challah* and various other instances; in Christianity, the sacrifice of the Holy Mass is celebrated. This is an interesting bit of continuity between the three major monotheistic religions.

The Imam then went on to talk about the major topic he wanted to discuss. This topic was answering the call to wake up as prayer is better than sleep. An interesting element that was discussed during this was that the whole universe is also the Qur’an, not just the book. This means that this imam seems to subscribe to the idea that the Qur’an was not created, but instead

has existed for all time before and will continue to exist; the physical Qur'an is just the written element. At this point, the Imam got on his knees and began praying, which was succeeded by a continuation of readings and preaching. The imam did not just touch on religious topics while preaching; he also touched on social issues, economic challenges, and similar issues, just as the Qur'an does. After a long session of preaching, the imam offered a final prayer.

The motions of the *Jummah* prayer was more reminiscent of things I have experience in a more traditional catholic setting, such as bowing after the name of Christ is spoken, certain movements, such as bows and genuflection, the sign of the cross, the triple cross before the gospel, the pounding of the chest, and similar motions. Just as in Catholicism, the motions of the *Jummah* prayer intend to physically worship God and glorify His name and presence. While the motions aforementioned, which are done in the Catholic church, are made periodically throughout mass and prayer, the various movements of the *Jummah* prayer are made in succession. The effect, though, creates a beautiful and unifying atmosphere of reverence, devotion, and mystery. While it is something completely foreign to me, there are many similarities between the *Jummah* and things I am more familiar with.

The *Takbir* seems akin to the sign of the cross as it signifies the beginning of prayer. They then moved through the *qiyaam* into the *ruku*. The prayer spoken during the *Ruku* is similar to the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* sung during a mass; Muslims say "Glory to God, the Most Great," while Catholics say "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace to people of goodwill." I found it interesting that they are forbidden to fidget when in the position; even when Christ is present during the Mass, fidgeting is not prohibited in any way. This is a sign of genuine respect and devotion. They then move through another *qiyaam* into the *Sujud*, which is a form of prostration. Prostration is something not present for the laity during a Catholic service, but there

are instances where the clergy prostrates themselves, specifically during Good Friday mass and ordination masses. Prostration, especially done in the communal setting of the *Jummah*, must be a very unifying force bringing everyone in the congregation together on their knees before God. Following this, the congregation sat up before going back down into the *Sujud*. The prayer spoken during this, “Glory be to God, the Most High,” is reminiscent of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* as well as the *Gloria Patri*. After this, the congregation exchanges a sign of goodwill and peace to each other, again a unifying force beginning the congregation together before God. The actions taken during the *Jummah* are solely focused on the glory of God and the worship of Him, and is a beautiful way for the Muslim community to come together as a unit and pray. It forms brotherhood and sisterhood while completely focusing on God; there are very few human-focused elements present during the *Jummah*.

The service was not what I expected at all. I have only ever attended *Novus Ordo* and *Tridentine* Masses, as well as a few protestant services, so my perception of a service is based almost entirely on what I have experienced in the church. The service I watched was not something similar to much of anything I have experienced before, but it was still a beautiful service focused on glorifying God. The motions are actions done during the service and the *Jummah* are done by each member of the congregation at the same time while standing in a line next to each other. It would be hard to not feel connected to each other and to God. While I believe that a Sufi service would be something more similar to what I am used to in the Church, this was an interesting service to observe with many beautiful aspects and similarities to what I know.